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ABSTRACT

Case studies of local development projects in Scotland, Norway, Australia, and the United States (Minnesota) indicate that federal education programs of a "generative" nature (those linking educational improvement to other improvement efforts, emphasizing process, and stimulating grass-roots participation) are most likely to promote education as an aid to rural community development. Analysis of NIE, USOE, and Assistant Secretary for Education programs reveals that while rural schools receive a fair share of federal monies under these programs, they may be at a disadvantage when allocation formulas are based on numbers rather than percentages. Localities may suffer from policies that address only individual or national needs. There is need for a careful analysis and restructuring of federal programs to emphasize a long-range view and to integrate programs and services in order to approach rural problems comprehensively. Specifically, programs with special potential for rural community development and education should be identified and their guidelines overhauled to accomodate the rural sector. Those federal programs for rural districts which could feasibly be combined should be bundled into "block grants". Appropriate parties should examine the "enabling" potential of all federal education programs and provide for it when it is absent. (SB)

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ANALYSIS OF FEDERAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

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Overview

This paper is a first tentative appraisal of the match between major federal programs affecting education and the characteristics of programs that would be likely to promote education as an aid to rural community development. It attempts, at this stage, to be suggestive or to point the way toward an adequate analysis and has a more conceptual than empirical emphasis. The paper will be expanded later to include a more thorough analysis of legislative intent for current Federal education and related programs and their impact in rural settings.

The first part of the paper is a somewhat speculative framework for understanding "community development." After some general discussion of community in a specifically U.S. context, it reports very briefly on four case studies of local development projects, three of which are foreign. It then abstracts "essential" characteristics of the local development efforts, suggesting characteristics of schemes that would be most likely to encourage U.S. rural community development. Part II discusses the dominant characteristics of current Federal programs and their prevailing emphasis, "sentiment," and thrust. Part III is a preliminary attempt to assess the extent and nature of the match between current needs and current programs and to suggest a somewhat tentative agenda for future activities and research in this area.

I. Rural Community Development

An Unmet Need

There seems to be no question that "rurality," whether understood or fantasised, has enjoyed a revival of interest in recent years on the

part of both the public and certain scholars. Johnathan Sher has called this renewed interest in rural affairs a "renaissance," and he may be correct in using such a strong designation. (See Sher: 1977). On the empirical side, Calvin Beale's early studies on migration back to the countryside may have been the first scholarly recognition of the 1970s' interest in rurality. (Beale: 1975; 1978). They certainly appear to have been the first national documentation of the trend toward returning to the countryside or the small community. That trend is continuing today. Readers should remember, however, that the trend has not affected all rural communities, although it is present in all geographic regions of the country. Significant numbers of rural communities are declining in population and others remain in a relatively static condition. Some of the poorest rural communities have not been affected by reverse migration and may be expected to be facing a different set of problems than those encountered by the communities beset by rapid population increases. Both types, however, will probably confront substantial difficulties over the next several years.

A few studies indicate that part of what motivates migrants to the countryside is a desire for a less frantic, more tranquil life and a desire for integration into a community. (Ross and Greene: 1979; Ploch: 1978). There have been several speculations and some indications that a failure on the part of newcomers to anticipate or comprehend the meaning of "rurality" leads to conflict between oldtimers and newcomers in the community.[1] All these factors, however, point to the need to examine the meaning of community and to isolate those characteristics that seem to encourage development <u>of</u> a community. It should be noted also that a significant part of the population turnaround can be accounted for by economic factors, i.e., the presence of

[1]Nicholas Smith showed me his study on this theme at the Northwest Regional Laboratory (Portland, Oregon) in 1978. Unfortunately, I do not have a copy of the paper for citation.

new job opportunities as a result of developing energy enterprises. (Since economic growth and stability might be regarded as indicators of community development, it will be necessary to take this phenomenon into account in later studies that follow the current Ross and Greene study of the impact of rapid population growth in energy producing rural areas.)

Whatever economic factors may be operating at this time to encourage a move to smaller places, social factors also appear to be encouraging such moves. Perhaps it is not unreasonable to suggest that what we are seeing, from a historical perspective, is a rejection of what is perceived to be excessive individualism and an intuitive but broadly-based search for a sense of community -- partly as antidote to perceived shortcomings of individualism. There is certainly a great deal of popular as well as scholarly literature on this theme, most of it far more thorough in analyzing the shortcomings of individualism than in specifying the meaning of community and the factors that make it work. (See, for example, Lasch: 1978; Elias: 1973; and Berger, Berger, and Kellner: 1973).

There is a danger here of romanticizing community, of asking more than it can give, of fantasizing it as something that it is not, and of ultimately failing to understand what constitutes a genuine community, enhances its workability, and aids its development. There is, moreover, a need to base expectations on the meaning of community as it has been applied specifically in the United States. In reference, therefore, to the condition of "unmet need" in rural America's underdeveloped areas, we need to recognize three shortcomings: (1) a failure to specify what American communities have been like in the past, (2) an accompanying failure to specify what one may reasonably expect a viable U.S. rural community to be like today, and (3) a lack of attention to the development of an essential process, or essential

processes, capable of responding to the substantial diversity that characterizes rural America.

A broad overview of American educational history would suggest that, as much as Americans may have talked and continue to talk about the importance of community, their actions have consistently shown more interest in leaving the community than in maintaining it. There have, it seems, always been "the good old days" when people helped each other, held to the same values, and maintained an integrated, mutually-reinforcing set of community institutions. Those "good old days" have existed, at any rate, in American fiction. In fact, however, the American pattern of growing up has encouraged each generation to "face life" by leaving the nest and taking on new adventures in, first, a physical frontier and, later, an economic one. (See Handlin and Handlin: 1971; see also Turner: 1966). A "survey" reading of American literature would illuminate the theme of adolescent departure from the home and the community into the broader world of adventure in wilderness or cosmopolitan setting. (Parks: 1977). Although some families have lived in the same community for generations, that is not the characteristic American way. Rather, American parents have--sometimes in anguish, but usually with hope--encouraged the solution of "up and out."

However great may be the number of youths who have <u>not</u> "made it," the American scheme for upward mobility has historically been "leaving home." (See Handlin and Handlin). But world and national events, along with accompanying social changes of great magnitude in recent years, may have simply rendered that scheme inappropriate, if not downright obsolete. A recent OECD document reports on this occurrence in so many countries that it may be justifiable to say that it is happening in developed countries around the world:

> The . . . assumption is that the strategy of using education primarily to promote individual mobility is reaching the point of diminishing returns.

> Particularly for young people coming from isolated rural communities or impoverished urban neighborhoods, the message communicated by the education system, by employment training programmers and even by the media was that economic opportunity and other components of "the good life" were only to be found elsewhere; that is, outside their home communities. This was a powerful message and the known opportunities at home (which were often marginal) could not begin to compete with the lure of unknown (but supposedly excellent) opportunities elsewhere. (OECD: 1979, page 4)

If this assessment is correct, and if there is not only a public sentiment but also a national economic necessity for the development of rural communities, then U.S. policy in general and U.S. educational policy in particular may be confronting a task that is confounded with an additional difficulty. It must implement something that the society has not had comprehensively and consistently for a long time, and it must do so under conditions of restricted choices. Before our policies can be effective, they must first reflect a greater understandimg of and commitment to the idea of "community" than has historically been the case in this country.

We may reasonably expect rural places to exhibit aspects of social integration within communities, but it seems unreasonable to expect American rural communities to consist of like-minded people who cherish the same values and ideals while upholding the same behavioral norms. Rural communities may come closer to this state than metropolitan ones, but that definition is too constraining--the U.S. does have a strong tradition of individualism. Moreover, our society is too diverse for like-mindedness, and it does not seem likely that social change, whatever form it takes, will support or even permit a state of stasis. There are notable exceptions, of course: Amish communities maintain themselves in just such a fashion, as do a few other communities of religious minorities. Even so, however, their activities tend to be related economically to those within a broader community. (The

Amish community of Douglas County, Illinois is a case in point.)

Don Edgar of Australia argues, in support of Max Weber, that communities are built on conflict rather than initial cooperation, and that it is the task of social policy to encourage rational cooperation by using conflict creatively so that local solutions are generated and the local capacity for problem solving is thereby strengthened. (Edgar: 1978, p. 10). Edgar's account of a local development scheme in Victoria lends some support to this notion and might have some relevance for American schemes, though the specific techniques might not be considered entirely appropriate in an American context.[2]

The idea that conflict is a necessary precondition for community development is intriguing. We might contrast the practical consequences of applying this definition with our own tendency to speak vaguely and nostalgically of "integrated rural communities," and our other tendency to apply the term "community" to any aggregate of people and institutions within a designated geographic area (e.g., the New York community, the Squaw Valley community, the Harlan County community, the "Mansfield" community). What we do less often than talk generally or nostalgically is define the attributes of a functioning rural community. It seems easier to identify the problems of declining rural areas in quantitative terms, and thereby infer the need for a "more is better" solution, than to specify the structural and functional characteristics of dynamic rural conditions. The latter

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[2]The Australian scheme was to encourage proposals from the schools and others in the community, reject those that did not meet its criteria but encourage revisions, and fund those that complied. That is, the scheme gave the appearance of being more open-ended than it was, taking into account from the outset the probability that isolated rural people would resist cooperation and sharing unless there were negative consequences for proposing non-sharing solutions.

approach would encourage the logical next step of attempting to delineate the types of developmental activities needed to revitalize communities. Thus it is not enough to say that poor rural communities lack adequate economic institutions, employment opportunities for the young, social services, educational offerings and opportunities, transportation, sewers, and general esprit and pluck. What we need to do is find a way to indicate the enabling devices that would allow rural communities to re-create themselves so that they are not always in the crisis posture of petitioning a state or Federal agency to "rescue" them from some imminent catastrophe.

Fortunately, there is some cross-national evidence that rural development schemes of a "generative" nature have been promoted with some degree of success. For descriptions of how this approach has been applied, I will cite four case studies of local rural development schemes. They are the Community and Cultural Education Project in the Western Isles of Scotland; the Lofoten Project in Norway; the Country Education Project in Victoria, Australia; and the Community Development Project in Staples, Minnesota.

The Lofoten Project: Norway

The Lofoten Project, which began in 1973, was an attempt to address the dual problems of rural community decline and the unsatisfactory educational performance of rural youths. (Elementary education was not judged to be a serious problem.) The scheme evolved from both need and theory: Norway's need to upgrade and maintain the fishing villages that contribute greatly to the national wealth, and the theory that a more locally-relevant curriculum would improve rural student performance, help the economy, and promote community revitalization.

In 1973, a university team approached several local educational authorities with a plan to help schools and teachers create a unique local

curriculum for the Lofoten area and to offer a flexible school calendar that would allow rural students to participate in fishing activities during the busy seasons. After a number of authorities agreed to participate in the project, the plan was initiated later in the same year.

Although the project has not been completed or evaluated in its final stages, preliminary results indicate that this is a promising approach. Schools have varied in their ability to adapt to the new curriculum and to the process orientation that it requires, but a number of them have made exceedingly successful changeovers. A significant difficulty has been that teacher-student role relationships are altered when "local knowledge" replaces traditional school knowledge as part of the school's curriculum. The change has not been easy for all the teachers.

To date, however, no one has given up, although various compromises and adaptations have had to be accommodated. No two schools have progressed toward implementation in equivalent ways. Yet the indications are that, on the whole, predictions are being met. Students are participating not only in learning "local knowledge" but also in creating it. After some initial suspicion and uncertainty, local communities have become more supportive of schools and more involved in them. The project designers appear to believe that the chances for decreasing the talent drain and maintaining the community self-esteem that is being created are quite good:

> Learning <u>in</u> school is no longer just <u>for</u> school. This may eventually have the effect that a clear-cut distinction between schooling and work will gradually vanish for pupils at the higher grades, and that ordinary people may be a kind of part-time teacher (if it were not for the teachers' union). Høgmo and Solstad: 1978, p. 10)

Citing the negative effects of "urban-like preferences" on rural young people, and their ability to penetrate all aspects of even the most

rural young person's life, the authors suggest that "it is . . . impossible to give any firm answer to the question of which factor is more powerful, education or the mass media." They hypothesize, however, that a locally-relevant curricular approach can tip the balance in education's favor:

> A school which is working closely in accordance with the local community is in a better position to fulfill its task, judged from an individual, local, regional, national, or global point of view. This school may stimulate and reinforce the factors that might strengthen the local community and may actively counteract the destructive tendencies. (Høgmo and Solstad: p. 10)

A significant feature of the Lofoten project is that it has been in progress for six years and is not yet considered to be completed. As compared with typical U.S. government projects, the longer intervals that European authorities tend to allocate for education research and development seem significant. In instances where rural development is part of the education scheme's objective, the longer time may be required for a reasonable expectation of success.

Community and Cultural Education Project: Scotland

The Western Isles Project in Community and Cultural Education began in 1975 and has produced a preliminary assessment that is very positive but very replete with cautions about the developing nature of the work. This innovation is more complex, in the sense of having more components and more funding sources to cope with, than is the Lofoten project.

When Scotland reorganized local government in 1975, the Western Isles were created as a new unit:

> The newly-formed unit brought together a loose chain of islands which had many characteristics in common. Among those was a multiple set of social and economic problems, but the most significant factor was their common cultural and linguistic background.
>
> The structural changes . . . provided a new frame of reference within the islands. It made it

> possible for people to comprehend their own requirements and to seek ways of fulfilling them. It provided an opportunity to initiate developments which would be in terms of the islands' way of life. (Murray and Macleod: 1978, p. 1)

Thus from the outset the Scottish project was more concerned than was the Lofoten project with the issue of unique cultural identity, in particular with bilingualism. (Islanders are dominant in the Gaelic language, although language dominance is changing rapidly with the youngest generation.) It appears to have given at least as much attention to enhancing the community's economic situation and cultural pride as to school-improvement efforts. It has, in addition, made sustained, systematic efforts throughout the course of various discrete projects to link community and school activities. The theme that runs throughout all the activities might be termed regeneration of islands life. To this end there are the Community Education Project (Proisect Muinnter nan Eilean), the Bilingual Education Project, the Community Cinema and Communications Project (Cinema Sgire), the Gaelic Drama Project (Fir Chlis), and a Gaelic-English educational publishing company (Acair Ltd.).

Funding has been arranged with a number of government agencies and private foundations, with coordination being provided by the LEA and with somewhat elaborate procedures for utilizing the advice and assistance of the various groups. The initial planning appears to have been made possible by a considerable degree of flexibility on the part of national and regional authorities and by the LEA's willingness (and ability) to live with a complicated, time-consuming set of procedures. It does not appear that haste characterized the implementation of any activity. Rather, there was continual insistence that the locally-relevant persons decide on the implementation of each step of each activity, although this procedure was often very

time consuming. The goal ("local problem-solving capacity" in current U.S. usage) has been persistently and even adamantly sought throughout the project's duration. The scheme is one that appears in every instance to be concerned with "the essential process":

> At . . . intervals, project reports are submitted to the committees of the local authority. The aim of these reports is to provide an indication of whether or not the project is having a beneficial effect on those with whom it is involved. . . . Central to the approach of these projects is the evaluation of whether participants have learned to approach problems in a more positive, confident manner as a result of having taken part in the projects. Of secondary importance is the content of what was achieved during the course of the projects. (Murray and Macleod, p. 31)

The background, context, and superordinate purpose for all the activity has been stated with such clarity that it requires direct quoting at length:

> What is being aimed for is one flexible learning system which offers opportunities for the whole community irrespective of age or interest. The work of the schools (formal education) is but one part of this system of community education . . .
>
> A community learning system requires new information from various sources. Acair, Fir Chlis and Cinema Sgire provide information and give access to various means of expression by people in the community. Each attempts to lessen the passive acceptance by people of knowledge from outside and encourages them to give form and expression to their own experience, . . . to bring people 'ways of knowing' which affect their lives and offers them the means to act upon them. They are an example of part of an educational system which aims to liberate and strengthen the individual in his own community. (Murray and Macleod, p. 33)

The Country Education Project: Victoria, Australia

The Country Education Project differed from the two efforts described above in an important respect. It was based in five sparsely populated areas where geographic distance was a major obstacle to education and community

improvement efforts. Funded by the Australia Schools Commission, the project was charged with the unique task of devising innovative ways to improve educational opportunities for disadvantaged elementary and secondary education students in remote rural areas. After considerable discussion and preliminary planning, the funding source agreed to set up a two-year pilot project that would make use of innovative approaches to reach the established national goals of serving disadvantaged populations.

There seem to be two theories at the heart of the project, one about disadvantage and one about community. The Executive Director of the project, sociologist Don Edgar, has written: "Thus I argue that both actual competence and the competent self-image lie at the heart of educational (dis)advantage." (Edgar: 1978, p. 9). Moreover, the project staff decided very early in the project that Max Weber's insight about the role of conflict in community development should be applied:

> As the project would involve large geographic areas, with differing locational arrangements of towns and schools, it was necessary to consider whether interaction could be created in groups lacking cohesive forces. This brought to attention Weber's concept that community interaction, not necessarily harmonious, resulted from competition over scarce resources and as funds would be allocated to an area such a concept could be tested. (Edgar, p. 10)

Early planning resulted in somewhat theoretical assessments of the nature of "disadvantage" in sparsely populated areas and in subsequent schemes and goals. Project staff concluded that remote rural areas are characterized by a lack of (1) a political process, i.e., decision making procedures, (2) access to information, (3) access to resources, and (4) wider experiences and relationships. Activities designed to have long-term effects, or in other words to become "institutionalized" were then designed. The essential plan was that the Planning Committee would make funds for various projects available to communities that submitted proposals meeting specified

criteria: keeping to the broad guidelines of state policy, utilizing contributions from all designated sectors of the "community," and sharing resources with other agencies or groups outside the immediate local jurisdiction.

The Planning Committee suspected that people in remote rural areas, who felt left out in national programs and funds allocations, would move quickly to establish "turf rights" over various resources. That suspicion was borne out by subsequent events and was discouraged by the device of rejecting proposals that did not provide for comprehensive community input and resource sharing, for one of the project's aims was to diminish parochialism and create new sets of community interactions. The Committee also operated from a conviction, borne out by earlier Australian evidence, that a strong positive relationship exists between parental participation in education decision-making and student performance in school. This belief was translated into a plan for comprehensive community education that would allow persons of all ages to learn and to teach. The planners believed that a scheme leaving out older members of the community and failing to use them in the development of systemic networks would probably not have lasting effects.

The project was beset with initial difficulties at the planning stage, when the planning time was curtailed and only one "circuit-rider" was employed to work with the five areas selected. That curtailment of time and resources has meant that the Area Planning Committees were not fully informed at the beginning or able to utilize the full community's suggestions in their early activities. The Project therefore began by being out of step with its own procedures and had to compensate by various "backtracking" activities over the two years of its duration. By the second year, nevertheless, a significant number of proposals had been funded, and the project evaluation judged

that progress had been made toward implementation of systemic changes in remote rural areas:

> In general the C.E.P. appears to have achieved the initial aim of establishing the project as community based and getting a wide variety of groups and people involved in defining their educational problems and proposing solutions. (Edgar, p. 52)

A difficulty that has persisted throughout the project is altering role relationships between professionals and community people. At the time of the first evaluation, the District Inspectors were not participating, and both teachers and local administrators had shown some reluctance to become involved in participatory schemes that gave lay people a power in decision-making equal to theirs. On the positive side, the evaluators found that non-educators were often able to design the most effective schemes for meeting local needs and utilizing community resources. Since the Project was funded for only two years, one expects that more time is needed to overcome professional resistance to role changes that initially appear threatening to self-esteem and "ascribed" status.

Like the Norwegian and Scottish projects, the Australian plan was focused on four goals considered essential for long-term benefits: (1) development of local competence and enhancement of local self-esteem, (2) reliance on local knowledge and resources, (3) the creation of networks and linkages that endure beyond the funding stage, and (4) the creation of stronger bonds between the locality and national life. Unlike the other two, it was funded for a short term (two years), was spread over considerable geographic distances, and had to implement activities without adequate planning and community-preparation time. To some considerable degree, however, the Project appears to have compensated for many of the earlier setbacks.

Community Development through Educational Improvement:
Staples, Minnesota

Staples, Minnesota, a town threatened with economic decline, used a strategy of "educational improvement for community development." (Gjelten: 1978, p. 2). It is a twenty-year story that began in 1959 when trouble came to the railroads, which had been a major part of the local economy "throughout most of the town's history." (Gjelten: 1978, p. 2). At that time the town's leaders decided to take action. Panic "swept the community" as real estate values sank and people retreated economically, as though a seige were beginning.

This, then, is a case of locally-initiated reform - a town's attempt to save itself. At the first 1959 meeting of community leaders in Staples, a simple strategy was adopted - that of using the schools to rescue the town:

> From the very beginning, we decided to fight and survive, but we had to set about establishing priorities . . . and . . . the number one thing that came up . . . was, to have a strong school system. If we want to bring in new industry or new business or attract new people, we've got to be able to say, 'We've got a number one school system'. (Gjelten: 1978, p.)

Like Willy Loman's salesman friend who was liked but not "well-liked," the Staples school system was "good . . . a fine system," but "it wasn't well-known." From the start of this local development effort, therefore, an "image building" strategy was a central element: "Because there was a larger objective in making the community attractive for development, it was important that it be known for its good education." (Gjelten, p. 4). That decision led to a subsequent policy of developing local grantsmanship, which meant investing salary money in a local person charged with chasing down every grant opportunity, writing proposals for virtually everything that came along in the affluent 1960s, and following up when necessary in Washington, D.C. The strategy has resulted in a very large success for the community's schools and economic life.

The strategy of grantsmanship was linked with aggressive salesmanship, the development of a strong vocational education program, and the use of high-school students' services in improving the community (using the schools' heavy equipment to grade for a new airport and reclaiming a weedy lake) and enticing businesses to locate in Staples (preparing industrial sites at no charge to the new industry). In addition. the Area Vocational School's Director was responsive to local community people desiring vocational skills, arranging for instruction for displaced miners and for farmers who needed to learn equipment repair and maintenance.

All these activities, and others too numerous to cite in a brief discussion, were made possible by a functional element of the community and a structural innovation. The town was fortunate in having had a very stable population of "old time" residents who cared deeply for the community and knew it intimately, e.g., an elderly town "doc" who chaired the School Board, a long-term superintendent who began his day in a meeting with "the doc," a banker who was active in local government, and a principal who was friendly with all the others and also a long-term Staples resident.

At their first meeting, the group organized the Staples Development Corporation, which was made responsible for contacting industries considering relocation and was subsequently instrumental in getting local bonds passed and in buying and selling buildings and equipment. To raise money, the Development Corporation immediately sold stock, which was taken up by people at all economic levels, although there was no promise of a financial return for anyone. The stock was bought in a spirit of "community promotion."

In cooperating with various economic endeavors and in using grantsmanship to enrich the system and promote the image of Staples as a "progressive" town, the school has played "an activist role," one that Gjelten has concluded was "both natural and obvious":

> First, it could commit its considerable resources to the task: the personal influence and expertise of its staff (mostly long-term residents committed to the community), the knowledge and contacts to which it had access, the labor and skills of its students, and the equipment and facilities which it controlled. Secondly, it could contribute to the community by generating publicity for the place. (Gjelten, p. 22)

Unlike the other projects, the Staples effort was not a deliberate scheme for generating self-esteem within the community through development of competence and use of local knowledge and resources. Staples had a great deal of local competence and does not appear to have suffered from lack of esteem. The town's effort was rather to move so quickly when threatened with serious problems that small-town decline, and the loss of esteem that soon follows, would have no opportunity to occur. If the economic health of the town today and the excellent reputation of its school system are legitimate indicators, the strategy has had a very remarkable success.

Discussion of the Cases: Implications for Education and Rural Development

Although the four cases herein described differ in details and reflect unique national features and needs, they appear to share some essential common goals and theoretical underpinnings. In brief, these rural development innovations appear to have the following general characteristics, although not every project has all of them:

1. Development of and reliance on local knowledge, competence, resources, and expertise
2. A "bottom-up" process
3. Development of networks and linkages
4. Linking services across agencies and organizations
5. Emphasis on planning and process, with process seen as an end as well as a means
6. Emphasis on sharing and cooperation

7. Coordination of services
8. A comprehensive approach
9. Expectation that time and patience will be required if effects are to be durable.

Within a framework consisting of these essential elements, each project was significantly different in important respects from all others. In the Norwegian Project, considerable attention was given to theories about modern forms of alienation; there were systematic attempts to counteract tendencies toward alienation, or "homelessness," while working toward rejuvenation of local morale and toward assuring that the national economy would not suffer because of depressed rural conditions. The Scottish Project has emphasized cultural life (bilingualism, local knowledge, films, theatre, and community history) through several highly varied activities and has not addressed the economic problem as directly as did the Norwegian one. Rather, it has established a Cooperative to work on economic problems and to propose an array of employment schemes - directing its energies toward building local capacity for the long term.

The Australian Project has focused its efforts on integrating individuals and various community sectors within and across local boundaries and has, at least up to now, given more attention to local processes than to local knowledge per se. In working with sparsely settled, isolated rural areas, the Victorian Planning Committee chose to bet on the long-term benefits of establishing networks and mechanisms for resource sharing.

The Staples, Minnesota Project is unlike any of these in having been locally initiated and locally directed throughout its course. It is somewhat different also in its emphasis on economic issues and its determination to promote viable community economic enterprises. It appears to have been less concerned with knowledge for its own sake than were the other efforts, and

more concerned with using knowledge entrepreneurially. It exemplifies what is possible in U.S. small towns where leading citizens in the economic sector (a banker and mayor) are "chums" of leading citizens (superintendents and principals) in the educator sector, and where concern for the community is strong. Having been inspired by a town's economic problems, the Staples community development effort seems never to have lost sight of its perception that it must "hustle" and be "image-conscious" if it is to attract desirable resources.

These four cases illustrate both the ties that bind local development projects in theoretical similarity and the particular local conditions that stimulate unique approaches. Far from being necessary, monolithic approaches to rural development seem to prevent the essential condition of flexible guidelines that can accommodate unique local needs and resources. What does stand out, however, is that systemic improvement of rural education seems unlikely to occur unless educational improvement is linked to other improvement efforts. Further, it appears that an emphasis on process rather than short-term measurable outcomes, and a project's ability to stimulate genuine grass-roots participation, are essential in sustaining development beyond its euphoric early funding stages.

II. Federal Education Programs: Rural Potential

If it seems obvious that rural communities need processes, networks, and linkages that foster development, that point does not appear to have been taken into serious consideration as current Federal education programs were being designed. These programs need to be analyzed with three questions in mind: Do rural schools receive a fair, equitable share of Federal program monies? Do funds allocations formulas provide adequately for the specifically

rural factors? Substantively and qualitatively, are Federal programs so designed as to be of maximum use in rural settings? The remainder of this section will address these questions.

Federal Help for Rural Schools and Districts

There are 125 education programs within USOE alone. Since NIE was established in 1972, it has spent between $75 million and $110 million annually on education research, development, and dissemination. In addition, ASE funds policy centers to study education issues. Numerous Federal agencies outside DHEW provide funds for education research, development, and services, e.g., the Department of Agriculture, the National Science Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Humanities. At this time there are 23 legislative authorizations for education and $11.3 billion available in appropriations. (This paper will discuss only ASE, NIE, and USOE.)

NIE and ASE

Research on and policy analysis of rural education matters would not only tend to benefit rural schools a great deal; they are also essential for coping with (1) the host of unanswered questions on the rural sector that currently frustrate efforts to say much that is intelligible, and (2) the problems that rural areas are facing as a result of demographic shifts and social changes. Unfortunately, one may count on the fingers of one hand the comprehensive rural studies that have been supported by ASE and NIE collectively. (Parks and Sher: 1979, p.24). Gail Bass's study (Rand Corporation) of funds allocation patterns within Title IV-B and IV-C is the sole ASE rural contribution to date. For NIE there are the Experimental Schools Program, the ERIC/CRESS system, some selected efforts at the Northwest

Regional Education Laboratory, Paul Nachtigal's Rural Schools Improvement Study (which is ongoing), a small part of the Vocational Education Study (which is just beginning), and very little else. The 1977 study of Title I funds allocation expenditures and allocation analyzed patterns in rural districts but did not issue a separate report on the rural sector.

There is little evidence, therefore, that those agencies that are major gatekeepers for the education knowledge base have any interest in or concern for the rural sector's education problems. The studies that are ongoing or starting up, however, do promise to provide rich and extensive information. They are eagerly awaited. A major concern, however, is how NIE will structure its rural priorities agenda for FY 80-81. If only limited funds are available, it is essential that the Institute give serious consideration to education as an aid to rural development when it designs research programs for rural education.

U.S. Office of Education

It is not as easy as one might imagine to find out how much of the USOE monies find their way to rural school districts. A recent NRC survey of major USOE-funded programs indicates that people who administer the programs tend to have little knowledge of how much goes to the rural sector - and to be, at times, baffled by the question. (See Gjelten: 1979).

It appears, however, that when funds allocations are examined by metro and nonmetro categories, the nonmetro sector generally receives a fair share. (See Table I.) The trouble is, once again, with definitions of rural and with the organizational arrangements of schools and school districts within states. Although gross metro-nonmetro breakdowns are available, we do not know much about how monies are allocated to nonmetro areas and counties. We simply have no idea how much goes to the truly small, truly isolated, truly rural school. Does most of the money remain in the County Seat, or is

it distributed equitably to outlying schools? Since NCES does not routinely gather small-school data, and even frequently excludes such schools routinely from its samples, we cannot answer the question about the rural sector with any degree of confidence. (See Table 2.)

Table 1. Revenue Receipts of Local Public School Systems from Federal Sources, by Program and Metropolitan Status: United States, 1975-76 (Thousands of dollars)

		United States Total	Nonmetropolitan Areas
Total Federal Aid		5,338,661	1,700,964
Percent of U.S. Total		100.00%	31.9%
Distributed by State	ESEA	2,040,757	664,551
	NDEA	25,839	10,625
	VOC. ED.	189,722	54,260
	SCHOOL LUNCH, MILK	1,651,132	545,420
	OTHER	611,044	148,845
Direct Federal Aid	SAFA-CONSTRUCTION	13,958	2,674
	SAFA-OPERATION	463,481	155,953
	OTHER	432,729	118,636

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. National Center for Education Statistics. Statistics of Local Public School Systems, Finances, 1975-76.

(Gjelten: 1979, p.7)

There is yet another quantitative respect in which the rural sector may be omitted, slighted, or simply not taken into account. When access to Federal programs depends on numbers of disadvantaged (including handicapped) students, rather than on their proportions in the population, the poor rural school may be ineligible or seriously crippled in its ability to secure special programs. Thus there are, from a rural point of view, serious reservations about the new Title I formula, which will slant funding toward districts with large numbers of the disadvantaged. By that rule, even a relatively affluent metropolitan district can "win" over a small rural district with only several hundred students enrolled. (See Gjelten, p. 59).

Table 2. Comparison of United States averages to school districts with enrollments under 300 pupils: Federal programs.

	U.S. average	School districts with enrollments under 300
Percent of districts receiving assistance from any Federal programs	92%	76%
--From ESEA	78%	42%
--From SAFA (Impact Aid)	30%	15%
--From Vocational Education	30%	6%
--From other Federal programs	84%	66%

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. National Center for Education Statistics. Statistics of Local Public School Systems, Finances, 1970-71. Washington (NCES 75-149), 1975.

(Gjelten: 1979, p. 8)

There are, in addition, questions of local wealth and local tax effort. If any given district taxes itself proportionately more than do other districts for school expenses, and still ends up with less overall funds for schools, it scarcely seems fair that matching formulas allocate less monies to the poorer, more heavily-taxed district. Tom Gjelten's analysis and recommendation on this point seem worthy of consideration:

> A thorough study of the formulae underlying Federal aid programs should be undertaken to detect potential anti-rural tendencies. In general, rural people would benefit by a move away from dependence on absolute numbers of needy students towards percentages of needy students as criteria for determining local districts' allocations. Most formulae currently contain both standards; in practice, urban districts usually have much easier times reaching the necessary number of needy students to qualify than rural districts have reaching the necessary percentage. As complicated as current funding formulae already are, it is likely that increased complication (by adding factors of wealth, tax effort, and per pupil cost) would benefit rural districts. (Gjelten: 1979, p. 59)

The Character of Federal Programs

Ultimately, the question of program design and social intention underlying the vast array of Federal programs may be far more important than the question of current fair shares. A number of things indicate the need to seek integration of people, institutions, agencies, and organizations in rural improvement efforts. The changing preferences of significant numbers by Americans appear to indicate, as noted earlier, a search for "community." And as the 1980s' "era of belt-tightening" looms just ahead (it is already here but has not yet been officially proclaimed), it will be imperative to share and integrate resources and services. (Henderson: 1978). It will be better if this occurs through cooperation rather than by mandate, but occur it will unless we are content with even more serious maldistributions of national resources than now exist. Finally, there is a phenomenological characteristic of rural communities that makes aspects of our present approach quite inappropriate: because of their smaller size and unique situation in the national setting, they require integrative approaches to reform and improvement. Single-shot, one-focus programs tend to disrupt rural communities by undermining essential rural institutions. It also seems obvious that rural communities are ideal candidates for the "ecological" approach that is popular in talk among planners and intellectuals, if less so in application.

> An analysis of the general or overall effect of Federal programs for public schools might show that in the main such programs assume an individual upward-mobility model of schooling, that in reality they serve national interests that are already well established, as well as some individual interests, and that they ignore or overlook the best interests of local communities. (Parks: 1979, p. 2)

If, instead of education programs designed to accommodate an ecological approach to reform, we have programs that, on the whole, serve "individual mobility" and

"national need," without reference to community, we need to inquire about the nature and meaning of the mismatch.

Part III. The Match Between Federal Education Programs and Rural Development Needs

The teleology of the "individual-upward-mobility" model of schooling may not be apparent at first glance. The relationship between individual and national interests may also be less than obvious. An exploration of "individual upward mobility"'s meaning is therefore offered for consideration, along with a suggested exploration of its relationship to national goals.

When the physical frontier closed in 1890 (Turner: p. 89), the education frontier was opened up. People used it to advance, to escape, and simply to change. It was theoretically designed for the use of individuals, but its rules have always been so defined that not all could play. Those rules have been altered somewhat in recent years to accommodate various excluded players, but education has remained a game with winners and losers. Some players are given "handicaps", which they often manage to overcome, and some of the former non-players have learned the rules well enough to push themselves to the top.

Thus there has evolved the "up and out" strategy for individual advancement. It has had special consequences for small towns and rural communities, whose young people have left in hordes. It has probably been better for the individuals involved, however, than has the "let them eat cake" policy for America's rural areas. Both approaches simply left the rural community behind. They also left out racial minorities, females, and the poor.

When it became apparent that certain groups - European immigrants between 1900-1920, blacks and then other minorities in the 1960s, women in

the early 1970s - were sufficiently restless about a condition of relatively low status and limited opportunity as to be potentially disruptive, actions that gave out a particular message were undertaken. The message was that policy makers would redirect education or related policies so as to assure, for talented individuals within all groups, opportunities for recognition and success. That promise does not appear to have been denied, for one can without difficulty name talented individuals born Italian, Polish, poor, black, Hispanic, female, etc., who have achieved notable success or prominence. Moreover, the visible social disruptions that preceded changes in relevant policies appear to have diminished or died.

Since disruptions of the social order can be assumed to be troublesome to groups having a large chunk of society's resources and prestige, and since opening up opportunities to disenfranchised or underserved persons tends to defuse disorder, it may also be assumed that to provide opportunities within the individual upward mobility framework is to serve the interests of established groups, i.e., those that control private and public spheres and that thereby may be considered national, if not international, in orientation and influence.

The success of these policies might be attributed to their ability to offer "hope" and to ground that hope in a reality. For in reality, individuals from underprivileged groups have "made it" and are "making it." This occurrence might "prove" that "making it" is up to the individual, once discriminatory barriers have been removed. Or it might suggest at least a fair chance in a lottery: since some significant number of persons will acquire the more desirable slots that society has to offer, it is reasonable for any given individual to assume, under conditions of faircompetition, that (s)he may be one of the lucky ones.

Thus this condition arises: the cumulative effects of policies

intended to compensate for prior inequities or to change the odds in favor of the previously disenfranchised do "work" for some of those who are willing to accept the condition of individual competition, and they preserve the social order from disruptions that might challenge the right to dominance by entrenched groups. Powerful groups can accommodate members from minority groups or the previously poor without damaging their structures of influence. Those who make it through the sorting or winnowing process of formal schooling will have acquired some characteristics that place a distance between them and their group of origin; and though they may continue to promote the well-being of that group, they can usually be counted on to do so within "acceptable" guidelines.

It appears, then, that localities may suffer from policies that address only individual and national needs, or that address national needs through individual upward mobility, or the reverse. The local community gets left out of the equation. This omission has had and continues to have particular significance for rural communities. Far too often, rural youths desiring success, prominence, or simply the ability to make a decent living must leave the rural locale. Thus one often hears talk of the "brain drain" from rural places. And with respect to rural community development, the school consolidation movement that has eliminated large numbers of community schools in the past thirty years has particular significance. The claim is often made that rural decline follows the loss of a local school and that local schools, like other local institutions, are needed to revitalize declining rural communities.

From a theoretical perspective, as well as from a developmental one, it makes sense to entertain the notion that education which promotes local rural development needs to have roots in or relationships with the locality. It also seems reasonable to entertain a hypothesis that a

significant mass of education policies looking only to upward-mobility opportunities for individuals, without regard to their local community, will not enhance the well-being of communities that are in a marginal or declining state. (There is some evidence for this, as in Timothy Weaver's study of Preston County, West Virginia.) (Parks: 1979, pp. 3-4).

We are now in the situation of having insufficient places at the top. Only a fraction of those who are qualified will gain them, should we continue to play the game of education-for-individual-upward-mobility. The results are already coming in: new forms of psychosis, increasingly bitter competition among individuals and groups, institutional strains and failures. There is not enough room at the top for all those who played well by the rules. Those who lost are angry. Those who have the cherished slots hold them tenuously and anxiously, afraid that they will be snatched away.

The evidence indicates that it is time for a new game, a different model of education. If a "community"model of education can be fully understood and supported (see Dunne: 1978), it seems likely to do more than complete an unfinished triangle that to date has provided for individual and national mobility while leaving out the locality. It has greater theoretical potential than the "individual" model for serving the national interest in two ways. There is the "Norwegian" way of linking local and national well-being through recognition of their economic and social interdependency. There is the "Scottish" and "Australian" way of viewing socially-integrated, culturally proud people as a nation's best resource.

There is another point. If most people have an innate need for a "home," and if their early sense of esteem is rooted in identification wit a place, worthy in its own right, then it is foolish to pursue policies that promise advancement only through the "up-and-out" approach - particularly

when it has ceased to work. If the frontier has vanished forever in a crowded world, as clearly seems to be the case, then people must be given alternative visions of life, and their schools must be part of those visions.

"Only in North America," Alfred North Whitehead wrote about thirty years ago, "was (the Gospel of Individualism) ever the wholly dominant fact":

> In America very special conditions for human life were at that time in full operation. An empty continent, peculiarly well suited to European races, was in process of operation. . . . Accordingly, in America this epoch exhibits a wonderful development of sturdy independence, with the individual members of the population freely carving out their own destinies. This is the Epic Epoch of American life, and after the initial struggles of small beginnings it had a wonderful central period of about a hundred and fifty to two hundred years. It was a triumph of individual freedom, for those who liked that sort of opportunity. . . . This episode in human existence, when individualism dominated American life, cannot be too closely studied by sociologists. It is the only instance where large masses of civilized mankind have enjoyed a regime of unqualified individualism, unfettered by law or custom. (Whitehead, p. 144)

Implications for Federal Education Program Changes

I do not at this time have enough understanding of the 125 Federal education programs and their authorizing legislation to specify in detail needed regulatory and legislative changes. (Indeed, my first recommendation is that appropriate persons or organizations undertake such an analysis.) Because of NRC's recent "survey," however, I do have several thoughts about the general nature of needed policy/program changes. Before proceeding to some general recommendations, I should like to set forth some constraints that seem proper for guiding an intensive analysis.

1. Prudence and fairness demand that a restructuring of Federal programs to help the rural sector not degenerate into an exercise in "me-first-ism." The problem is not one of taking from urban so that rural may have, but rather one of specifying current rural needs being unaddressed or aborted by current policies and programs.

2. The long-range view should prevail. Although some short-term retailoring may be necessary to redress existing inequities, the long-term development of rural communities as viable entities should be the primary aim.

3. The next constraint is that the analysis should look for ways to integrate programs and services so that "the rural problem" may be approached comprehensively.

The following considerations in assessing a need for legislative change seem promising:

1. Decreasing administrative complexity so that small districts in need of Federally-funded programs are not (a) paralyzed by administrativia or (b) cut off from resources by sheer inability to cope.

2. Identification of programs with special potential for rural community development/education (e.g., Community Education, Arts and Humanities education, Environmental Education) and (a) provision for specific rural set-asides, (b) dissemination of information about such programs to rural districts, and (3) assistance to rural proposal writers.

3. Making possible the "bundling" of Federal programs for rural districts. If it were possible for rural schools to indicate a need for a specific bundle of programs - e.g., Title I, Handicapped, Arts Education, and community education - by application on one simplified form, the justification for need could be spelled out clearly and the plan for program integration made explicit. This "block grant" approach for rural communities would enable them to plan and administer their programs comprehensively rather than in piecemeal fashion.

4. Providing technical assistance in program knowledge, regulatory interpretation, and proposal-writing to rural school districts. Existing programs could be revised to accommodate this activity.

5. Providing technical planning assistance to districts confronting rapid population growth or decline, and/or other severe social changes. This approach could help avoid the "rescue from imminent catastrophe" tactic described earlier in this paper.

6. Seeking ways of linking existing sources of help or information, e.g., Agriculture's Extension Service, State ISAs, state "circuit riders."

The first task should be to decide which of the numerous Federal education programs have such a uniquely rural potential that their guidelines or regulations should be overhauled to accommodate the rural sector specifically. The second should be to determine which programs could feasibly be combined into "block grants" by special arrangements for the rural sector. The third task should be to examine the "enabling" potential of all programs and provide for it when it is not there. Although it may be heresy to say so, the result of a thorough analysis might mean less direct funding for "emergency" needs in education and more funds for capacity-building and local problem-solving ability.

The change, as Alfred North Whitehead saw it some forty years ago, is away from "unqualified individualism, unfettered by law or custom." The challenge, not yet met or even addressed as public policy, is to determine how freedom may be preserved in a situation where impulses must often be reined and where the common good must frequently take precedence over individual "wants." The immediate task is to enable people to understand that the peculiar definition Americans have given to individualism - the right to satisfy every "I want" - has little necessary relationship with the meaning of freedom.

In this context I believe that the four case studies are illuminative. If nothing else, they indicate that people tend to feel more expansive and free when they, even momentarily and at intervals, place the common good of their community at the forefront of their attention. It is this "felt" awareness that only long-term development efforts appear capable of evoking when, for whatever reasons of history or peculiar circumstances, rural communities do not have it.

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